

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS21183

This legislation directs the state department of education to define and implement a process outlining secondary school accreditation requirements for the purpose of participation in extra-curricular activities.

Background:

Students at some private Idaho schools do not have access to compete at the district and state level competitions in the only viable athletic system in the state of Idaho which is regulated by the Idaho High School Activities Association (IHSAA). The IHSAA is a member run, non-profit association that governs high school activities in the state of Idaho. IHSAA has two levels of membership—*Regular* and *Associate*:

Regular members can compete at all levels—league, district, and state.

Associate members may be allowed to participate in league play, but cannot participate in tournament play (district or state).

Students attending schools that are *Associate* members are not allowed to dual-enroll at public schools for sports.

Regular members are not allowed to play non-members under any circumstances. *Associate* member schools are allowed to compete against non-member schools.

IHSAA policy states that "any public or private school within the State of Idaho that meets the accrediting standards of secondary schools as required by the State Board of Education and facility and program requirements for interscholastic competitions as outlined by the IHSAA Board of Directors is eligible to become a regular member of the corporation." The Idaho State Board of Education has recognized the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) – a private, for-profit organization, as the states' academic accrediting body. To become a *Regular* member of the IHSAA, a school would need to be accredited by the NWAC. The IHSAA only allows schools who are accredited with NWAC to participate as *Regular* members. However, not all private schools use NWAC for accreditation purposes.

Further complicating matters, NWAC was recently purchased by another accreditation company, leaving Idaho in a transition in which it is moving away from the old policies and procedures of NWAC. Idaho is currently evaluating its options for accreditation. As a result, any school not accredited with NWAC has no recourse should it wish to become a *Regular* member with IHSAA.

FISCAL NOTE

This legislation has no impact on the state general fund.

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